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UNCLAS VATICAN 000173

SIPDIS

DEPT. FOR EUR/WE (MENNUTI), IO/UNP

FROM EMBASSY VATICAN/MESSAGE NO. 006/02

SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PREL VT UN

SUBJECT: SANT'EGIDIO WANTS VOTE ON ITS ECOSOC CANDIDACY

¶1. (SBU) THIS IS AN ACTION MESSAGE. SANT'EGIDIO INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS SPECIALIST MARIO GIRO CALLED DCM 01/10 TO SEEK USG SUPPORT IN FORWARDING THE SANT'EGIDIO CANDIDACY TO BE AN OBSERVER NGO AT THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 VATICA 00173 111447Z COMMITTEE OF THE UN (ECOSOC). GIRO EXPLAINED THAT SANT'EGIDIO BELIEVES IT HAS THE SUPPORT OF THE GREAT MAJORITY OF COUNTRIES SITTING ON THE "NGO COMMISSION" OF THE ECOSOC, INCLUDING OF THE UNITED STATES. GIRO AVERRED THAT ALGERIA OBJECTS TO THE SANT'EGIDIO CANDIDACY, AND HAS SUCCESSFULLY USED PARLIAMENTARY MANEUVERS TO POSTPONE THE VOTE. GIRO SOUGHT SUPPORT FROM THE US DEL FOR MOVING THE SANT'EGIDIO CANDIDACY TO A VOTE DURING THE UPCOMING SESSION OF THE "NGO COMMISSION" STARTING 01/14/02. IF THEIR CANDIDACY WERE TO BE BROUGHT TO A VOTE, GIRO WAS CONFIDENT SANT'EGIDIO WOULD PREVAIL.

¶2. (SBU) IN A PHONE CONVERSATION WITH MONS. DOMINIQUE MAMBERTI, THE HOLY SEE DESK OFFICER WHO COVERS UN ISSUES, POLOFF ASKED WHETHER THIS CANDIDACY IS ON THE HOLY SEE'S RADAR SCREEN. MAMBERTI WAS FAMILIAR WITH SANT'EGIDIO'S PROBLEMS IN ALGERIA, BUT KNEW OF NO OBJECTIONS TO ITS ECOSOC CANDIDACY IN THE HOLY SEE. AFTER ALL, HE SAID, "THEY ARE NOT SEEKING A PLACE ON THE SECURITY COUNCIL!"

¶3. (SBU) COMMENT: SANT'EGIDIO IS A RELIABLE INTERLOCUTOR OF THIS EMBASSY, AND ONE WHICH WE HAVE COLLABORATED WITH IN AREAS AS DIVERSE AS FUNDING ITS INTER-COMMUNAL EDUCATION EFFORTS IN KOSOVO AND SUPPORTING ITS EFFORTS A MEDIATING PEACE IN MOZAMBIQUE. WE ARE WORKING CLOSELY WITH SANT'EGIDIO TO SEE WHETHER THEY MIGHT CONTRIBUTE TO PEACE IN SUDAN. WHICH IS NOT TO SAY THAT SANT'EGIDIO HAS NEVER MADE A FALSE STEP -- ALGERIA BEING A CASE IN POINT. IN THE MID-1990S SANT'EGIDIO GOT INTO HOT WATER IN ALGERIA BY ORGANIZING A MEETING WITH ALGERIAN OPPOSITION WITHOUT COORDINATING ITS "BOOTLEG DIPLOMACY" EITHER WITH THE GOA OR UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 VATICA 00173 111447Z THE HOLY SEE. BOTH REACTED NEGATIVELY, AND THE GOA SEEKS STILL TO WISH TO PUNISH SANT'EGIDIO. NEVERTHELESS, FROM WHERE WE SIT THE GROUP HAS DONE A LOT OF GOOD WORK; CLEARLY IT CAN CONTRIBUTE IN A POSITIVE FASHION TO THE WORK OF THE ECOSOC AND WE ENDORSE ITS CANDIDACY.

¶4. (SBU) ACTION REQUESTED: PLEASE PROVIDE GUIDANCE ON HOW TO RESPOND TO SANT'EGIDIO'S REQUEST.
NICHOLSON

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